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# A STUDY OF POST OFFICE CRIMINALS



*Crime + Criminals - U.S.*

BY

DR. WILLIAM LITTLETON ROBINS,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Compliments of Author

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# Crime & criminals - U.S. A STUDY OF POST OFFICE CRIMINALS.\*

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The number of Post Office criminals here presented is 111 males.

Realizing fully the fact that little of practical importance can be gleaned from a study of small numbers of any classes of criminals, we very much regret that the number of Post Office criminals is not larger. But we shall have to content ourselves with the hope that this paper will stimulate some one of our readers to take up this much-neglected line of work where we leave off.

By the term Post Office criminals is here meant that class of criminals who select the United States government as their victim, and confine their work to a special branch of that government known as the Post Office Department.

A great majority of Post Office criminals never were employed by the Post Office Department; in fact, only about 10 per cent. of these were in the employ of that department at the time of their arrest.

Of the 111 Post Office criminals, ninety-two were Americans and nineteen were foreigners.

The ages range between seventeen and sixty-five. Dividing the ages into three periods, first, from seventeen to thirty; second, from thirty to

forty-five; third, from forty-five to sixty-five, we find that 56 per cent. of the criminals were of ages in the first period, 35 per cent. in the second period, and 9 per cent. in the third period. The average age of all Post Office criminals is thirty-two years, which is in excess of that of criminals in general. Whether this average will remain the same when much larger numbers have been studied is an open question. In all probability it will not.

The average of the foreigners is thirty-six years, while that of the Americans is thirty-two years. Both of these will probably be found to be excessive when compared with larger numbers of foreign and American Post Office criminals. The total number of tattooed is twenty-two, or 20 per cent., and the total number having a known alias is forty-three, or about 40 per cent. These figures would probably be borne out in a study of larger numbers. The total number with dark complexion is thirty-four, or 30 per cent., while the number with light complexion is thirty-one, or 28 per cent. The total number with dark hair is thirty-five, or 31 per cent., while the number with light hair is twenty-five, or 21 per cent. Thus we find that the greater percentage of Post Office criminals are brunettes, but in the case of criminals in general the percentage of brunettes is probably

\*The data from which this paper is prepared were kindly furnished by Chief Post Office Inspector W. E. Cochran and his assistants of the Post Office Department at Washington, D. C.

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greater than that of Post Office criminals. The number of Post Office criminals having light eyes is seventy-one, or 64 per cent., while the number having dark eyes is twenty-one, or 20 per cent.

The right ear of Post Office criminals would appear to be longer than that of the California prisoners. It will be noted that the length of forearm is precisely the same in both classes of criminals (462 mm.), but that it is

TABLE NO. I.

| Average of 111 P. O. Criminals |               | Average of 2,000 prisoners at San Quentin, California.<br>(Drähms.) |               | Average of Amherst Students.<br>(Hitchcock.) |               |                   |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
|                                | Metric<br>mm. | English<br>Inches                                                   | Metric<br>mm. | English<br>Inches                            | Metric<br>mm. | English<br>Inches |
| Height .....                   | 1,717         | 67.6                                                                | 1,696         | 66.8                                         | 1,726         | 67.9              |
| Reach .....                    | 1,756         | 69.1                                                                | 1,767         | 69.6                                         | 1,794         | 70.6              |
| Sitting Height .....           | 914           | 36.                                                                 |               |                                              |               |                   |
| Length R. Ear .....            | 64            | 2.6                                                                 | 62.4          | 2.5                                          |               |                   |
| Length L. Foot .....           | 261           | 10.3                                                                | 258           | 10.1                                         | 260           | 10.2              |
| Length L. Mid. Finger .....    | 114           | 4.4                                                                 | 115           | 4.5                                          |               |                   |
| Length L. Little Finger .....  | 89            | 3.5                                                                 | 94            | 3.7                                          |               |                   |
| Length L. Forearm .....        | 462           | 18.2                                                                | 462           | 18.2                                         | 449           | 17.7              |
| Max. Length Head.....          | 193           | 7.60                                                                | 189           | 7.44                                         | 189           | 7.44              |
| Max. Width Head .....          | 153           | 6.0                                                                 | 151           | 5.9                                          | 154           | 6.1               |
| Cephalic Index .....           | 79.27         |                                                                     | 79.84         |                                              | 81.48         |                   |

The table on this page will show a basis of comparison between Post Office criminals, criminals in general and normal-college students, their average ages being for practical purposes about the same.

Comparing the above figures (table I), we find that in stature, length of foot and width of head, the measurements of the Post Office criminals approach nearer to those of the Amherst students than to those of the California prisoners. This would seem to indicate that Post Office criminals are probably superior in intelligence to criminals in general. We grant that the Post Office criminals here presented have longer heads than either the students or the prisoners. But there is at least some compensation in the width of the heads of Post Office criminals.

markedly less in the students (449 mm.), notwithstanding the fact that the students are taller and have longer reach than either the Post Office criminals or the prisoners. Though the Post Office criminals are taller than the prisoners, they apparently have shorter fingers than the latter.

While there is according to Roberts a deficiency of stature of 2.06 inches, and of weight of 17.8 pounds on the part of criminals in general as compared with the general population, it would appear from reference to the above table that there is practically no deficiency in stature on the part of Post Office criminals and only a difference of seven pounds in weight.

By reference to table III, we find that although the average foreigner is 11 mm. shorter in stature than the average American, his weight is prob-

ably equal to or slightly in excess of that of the American. The Americans being taller than the foreigners and their sitting heights being practically the same, this would seem to indicate that the Americans have longer legs than the foreigners. Though shorter in stature, the foreigners would appear to have fingers and feet quite as long as those of the Americans.

It will be noted that the crime of

murder, which appears but once, was committed by a foreigner. Of the foreigners, five were born in England, four in Germany, four in Ireland, three in Canada, one in Cuba, one in Scotland and one in France.

Among the foreign Post Office criminals, brunettes would seem to predominate.

Referring to the crimes of Americans as compared with foreigners, that

TABLE No. II.

Showing Stature and Weight of the General Population of the United Kingdom, compared with that of Adult Male Criminals in General and Post Office Criminals in Particular:

| Average                    | Height |        | Weight    |
|----------------------------|--------|--------|-----------|
|                            | Inches | Pounds |           |
| General Population .....   | 67.66  | 158.2  | (Roberts) |
| Criminals .....            | 65.6   | 140.4  | (Roberts) |
| P. O. Criminals (111)..... | 67.60  | 151.2  |           |

TABLE No. III.

Showing a comparison by Bertillon Measurements and Other Means Between the American and the Foreign Post Office Criminals.

| All Americans.<br>(Total No., 92 or 83 per cent.) |              | All Foreigners.<br>(Total No., 19 or 17 per cent.) |              |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Average Age.....                                  | 32 years     | Average Age.....                                   | 36 years.    |
| " Weight.....                                     | 151 lbs.     | " Weight.....                                      | 152 lbs.     |
| " Height.....                                     | 1719 mm.     | " Height.....                                      | 1708 mm.     |
| " Reach.....                                      | 1759 "       | " Reach.....                                       | 1744 "       |
| " Sitting Height.....                             | 914 "        | " Sitting Height.....                              | 913 "        |
| " Length R. Ear.....                              | 64 "         | " Length R. Ear.....                               | 65 "         |
| " Length L. Foot.....                             | 261 "        | " Length L. Foot.....                              | 262 "        |
| " Length L. Middle Finger.....                    | 114 "        | " Length L. Middle Finger.....                     | 115 "        |
| " Length L. Little Finger.....                    | 88 "         | " Length L. Little Finger.....                     | 89 "         |
| " Length L. Forearm.....                          | 463 "        | " Length L. Forearm.....                           | 458 "        |
| " Max. Length Head.....                           | 193 "        | " Max. Length Head.....                            | 193 "        |
| " Max. Width Head.....                            | 153 "        | " Max. Width Head.....                             | 154 "        |
| Dark Complexion.....                              | 26 Per Cent. | Dark Complexion.....                               | 47 Per Cent. |
| Light Complexion.....                             | 29 "         | Light Complexion.....                              | 32 "         |
| Dark Hair.....                                    | 36 "         | Dark Hair.....                                     | 53 "         |
| Light Hair.....                                   | 20 "         | Light Hair.....                                    | 32 "         |
| Dark Eyes.....                                    | 17 "         | Dark Eyes.....                                     | 42 "         |
| Light Eyes.....                                   | 45 "         | Light Eyes.....                                    | 47 "         |
| Alias Known.....                                  | 40 "         | Alias Known.....                                   | 32 "         |
| Tattooed.....                                     | 21 "         | Tattooed.....                                      | 16 "         |

#### CRIMES.

|                                                            |              |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Fraudulent Use of Mails and<br>Other Schemes to Defraud... | 37 Per Cent. |
| P. O. Burglary.....                                        | 35 "         |
| P. O. Robbery.....                                         | 14 "         |
| Larcenies.....                                             | 14 "         |

|                                                            |              |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Fraudulent Use of Mails and<br>Other Schemes to Defraud... | 42 Per Cent. |
| P. O. Burglary.....                                        | 21 "         |
| P. O. Robbery.....                                         | 21 "         |
| Larcenies.....                                             | 11 "         |
| Murder.....                                                | 5            |

which attracts our attention most is the apparent fact that Americans commit more burglary than foreigners.

Dividing the American Post Office criminals into laborers and non-laborers, we find that 85 per cent. belong to the former class and 15 per cent. to the latter.

By comparison, we find the American laborers are heavier and taller than the non-laborers. Although their head lengths are precisely the same, the laborers have narrower heads than the non-laborers. The cephalic index of the laborers is 78.79, while that of the non-laborers is 80.31.

Light eyes and dark hair would seem to predominate in both the laborers and the non-laborers; but the former show a greater percentage with light complexions, while among

the latter dark complexions are in the majority.

A noteworthy feature in reference to the American non-laborers is that only 5 per cent. of them (as compared with 16 per cent. of the American laborers) had been tattooed. Of the crimes committed by the American non-laborers 80 per cent. were schemes to defraud, leaving but 20 per cent. for burglary, robbery and larceny. In the case of the American laborers, however, we find that 81 per cent. of their crimes were made up of burglary, robbery and larceny, leaving only 19 per cent. for schemes to defraud. Thus it will be seen that in the character of the crimes, a well-defined dividing line between American laborers and non-laborers is to be found.

TABLE No. IV.

Showing a Comparison by Bertillon Measurements and Other Means Between American Laborers and American Non-Laborers.

| American Laborers.        |              | American Non-Laborers.    |              |
|---------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Average Age               | 30 years.    | Average Age               | 34 years.    |
| " Weight                  | 152 pounds   | " Weight                  | 149 pounds.  |
| " Height                  | 1724 mm.     | " Height                  | 1706 mm.     |
| " Reach                   | 1762 "       | " Reach                   | 1750 "       |
| " Sitting Height          | 916 "        | " Sitting Height          | 909 "        |
| " Length R. Ear           | 64 "         | " Length R. Ear           | 63 "         |
| " Length L. Foot          | 262 "        | " Length L. Foot          | 259 "        |
| " Length L. Middle Finger | 115 "        | " Length L. Middle Finger | 112 "        |
| " Length L. Little Finger | 89 "         | " Length L. Little Finger | 86 "         |
| " Length L. Forearm       | 465 "        | " Length L. Forearm       | 457 "        |
| " Max. Length Head        | 193 "        | " Max. Length Head        | 193 "        |
| " Max. Width Head         | 152 "        | " Max. Width Head         | 155 "        |
| Cephalic Index            | 78.79 "      | Cephalic Index            | 80.31 "      |
| Dark Complexion           | 23 Per Cent. | Dark Complexion           | 40 Per Cent. |
| Light Complexion          | 37 "         | Light Complexion          | 15 "         |
| Dark Hair                 | 37 "         | Dark Hair                 | 40 "         |
| Light Hair                | 27 "         | Light Hair                | 15 "         |
| Dark Eyes                 | 15 "         | Dark Eyes                 | 25 "         |
| Light Eyes                | 46 "         | Light Eyes                | 45 "         |
| Alias Known               | 35 "         | Alias Known               | 45 "         |
| Tattooed                  | 16 "         | Tattooed                  | 5 "          |

#### CRIMES.

| Fraudulent Use of Mails and |      | Fraudulent Use of Mails and |      |
|-----------------------------|------|-----------------------------|------|
| Other Schemes to Defraud    |      | Other Schemes to Defraud    |      |
| P. O. Burglary              | 44 " | P. O. Burglary              | 10 " |
| P. O. Robbery               | 18 " | P. O. Robbery               | 5 "  |
| Larceny of Mail Pouches     | 10 " | Larceny of Mail Pouches     | 5 "  |

TABLE NO. 5.

Showing a Comparison by Bertillon Measurements and Other Means Between Foreign Laborers and Foreign Non-Laborers.

| Foreign Laborers.           |              | Average Length R. Ear.....  |                           | 66 mm.       |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Average Age.....            | 35 years.    | "                           | Length L. Foot .....      | 262 "        |
| " Weight .....              | 149 pounds   | "                           | Length L. Middle Finger.. | 115 "        |
| " Height.....               | 1700 mm.     | "                           | Length L. Little Finger.. | 89 "         |
| " Reach.....                | 1735 "       | "                           | Length L. Forearm.....    | 460 "        |
| " Sitting Height .....      | 913 "        | "                           | Max. Length Head .....    | 194 "        |
| " Length R. Ear.....        | 64 "         | "                           | Max. Width Head.....      | 155 "        |
| " Length L. Foot.....       | 261 "        | Cephalic Index .....        |                           | 80.00 "      |
| " Length L. Middle Finger.. | 114          | Dark Complexion .....       |                           | 56 Per Cent. |
| " Length L. Little Finger.. | 89           | Light Complexion.....       |                           | 30 "         |
| " Length L. Forearm.....    | 456 "        | Dark Hair .....             |                           | 56 "         |
| " Max. Length Head .....    | 192 "        | Light Hair .....            |                           | 30 "         |
| " Max. Width Head.....      | 154 "        | Dark Eyes.....              |                           | 44 "         |
| Cephalic Index .....        | 80.21 "      | Light Eyes.....             |                           | 44 "         |
| Dark Complexion .....       | 45 Per Cent. | Alias Known .....           |                           | 33 "         |
| Light Complexion .....      | 45 "         | Tattooed .....              |                           | 0 "          |
| Dark Hair .....             | 45 "         | CRIMES.                     |                           |              |
| Light Hair .....            | 45 "         | P. O. Robbery .....         |                           | 30 Per Cent. |
| Dark Eyes .....             | 40 "         | P. O. Burglary.....         |                           | 40 "         |
| Light Eyes.....             | 50 "         | Larceny .....               |                           | 20 "         |
| Alias Known .....           | 30 "         | Murder .....                |                           | 10 "         |
| Tattooed .....              | 30 "         | P. O. Robbery .....         |                           | 10 Per Cent. |
| Foreign Non-Laborers.       |              | P. O. Burglary.....         |                           |              |
| Average Age.....            | 36 years.    | Larceny .....               |                           |              |
| " Weight.....               | 156 pounds.  | Murder .....                |                           |              |
| " Height.....               | 1715 mm.     | Fraudulent Use of Mails and |                           |              |
| " Reach.....                | 1750 "       | Other Schemes to Defraud... |                           | 90 Per Cent. |
| " Sitting Height.....       | 912 "        |                             |                           |              |

Of the foreigners ten, or 56 per cent., were laborers, and nine, or 44 per cent., were non-laborers.

Foreign non-laborers would appear to be taller and heavier than the laborers. With the height of the non-laborers 15 mm. greater than that of the laborers, one would naturally expect the sitting height also of the former to be greater than that of the latter, but the contrary is true, which would seem to indicate that foreign non-laborers have longer legs than foreign laborers, among Post Office criminals.

The non-laborers appear to make up a much larger percentage of the foreigners than of the Americans. A noticeable feature is that foreign non-laborers appear to have longer and wider heads than the laborers. As in the case of the Americans, dark

complexions predominate among foreign non-laborers.

While 30 per cent. of the foreign laborers were tattooed, special attention should be directed to the fact that not one of the foreign non-laborers was tattooed. Of those who were *not* tattooed (the non-laborers), 90 per cent. were guilty of fraudulent use of mails and other schemes to defraud. In the case of those who were tattooed, however (the laborers), the crimes committed were of an entirely different and much more serious character; namely, burglary, robbery and murder.

Comparing American laborers with foreign laborers (tables IV and V), we find the Americans are taller and have longer arms than the foreigners. Dark complexions prevail to a greater

extent among foreign laborers than among American laborers.

Comparing American non-laborers with foreign non-laborers (tables IV and V), the foreigners would appear to be taller than the Americans. Dark complexions are present in greater proportions among foreign non-laborers than among American non-laborers.

Fraudulent use of mails and other schemes to defraud, having been recorded as the crimes committed by 90 per cent. of the foreign non-laborers, and 80 per cent. of the American non-laborers, a brief study of this class of Post Office criminals should be of interest. Thirty-three per cent. of the total number of Post Office criminals here presented were guilty of fraudulent use of mails and other schemes to defraud. Of these, 25 per cent. were laborers, and 75 per cent. non-laborers. Their average age is  $36\frac{1}{2}$  years; average weight, 159 pounds; average height, 1,715 mm.; average reach, 1,763 mm.; sitting height, 911 mm.; length of right ear, 64 mm.; length of left foot, 263 mm.; length of left middle finger, 113 mm.; length of left little finger, 87 mm.; length of left forearm, 462 mm.; maximum length of head, 194 mm.; maximum

width of head, 155 mm.; dark complexion, 35 per cent.; light complexion, 25 per cent.; dark hair, 40 per cent.; light hair, 18 per cent.; dark eyes, 22 per cent.; light eyes, 65 per cent.; alias known, 37 per cent.; tattooed, 3 per cent.

Comparing the averages of those guilty of schemes to defraud with the general averages of all Post Office criminals (table I), we find little difference in their heights, but a marked difference in their reach, those guilty of frauds showing an average measurement of 7 mm. greater in reach than that of the whole number of Post Office criminals. Their forearms measuring precisely the same, and those guilty of frauds having a longer reach than Post Office criminals in general, this would seem to indicate that the former have longer arms from the shoulder to the elbow, or else that they are broader between the shoulders, than the latter. Those guilty of frauds have slightly longer and wider heads than Post Office criminals in general.

Thirty-five per cent. of all the Post Office criminals having been guilty of burglary, a short study of them should be of some importance.

TABLE No. VI.

Showing the Average Measurements, etc., of Those Post Office Criminals Who Were Guilty of Burglary:

|                             |             |                        |              |
|-----------------------------|-------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Average Age.....            | 31 years.   | Alias Known .....      | 44 Per Cent. |
| " Weight.....               | 151 pounds. | Tattooed .....         | 38 "         |
| " Height.....               | 1717 mm.    | Dark Complexion .....  | 27 "         |
| " Reach.....                | 1741 "      | Light Complexion ..... | 35 "         |
| " Sitting Height .....      | 911 "       | Dark Hair .....        | 32 "         |
| " Length R. Ear.....        | 65 "        | Light Hair .....       | 29 "         |
| " Length L. Foot .....      | 261 "       | Dark Eyes .....        | 19 "         |
| " Length L. Middle Finger.. | 114 "       | Light Eyes .....       | 60 "         |
| " Length L. Little Finger.. | 89 "        |                        |              |
| " Length L. Forearm.....    | 460 "       |                        |              |
| " Max. Length of Head ...   | 192 "       |                        |              |
| " Max. Width of Head ....   | 151 "       |                        |              |

TABLE NO. VII.

Showing the Average Measurements, etc., of Those Post Office Criminals Guilty of Safe Blowing and Burglary.

|                              |             |                       |              |
|------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Average Age.....             | 31 years.   | Alias Known .....     | 54 Per Cent. |
| " Weight.....                | 152 pounds. | Tattooed .....        | 70 "         |
| " Height.....                | 1707 mm.    | Dark Complexion ..... | 40 "         |
| " Reach.....                 | 1727 "      | Light Complexion..... | 40 "         |
| " Sitting Height .....       | 907 "       | Dark Eyes.....        | 27 "         |
| " Length R. Ear .....        | 64.5 "      | Light Eyes.....       | 60 "         |
| " Length L. Foot .....       | 260 "       | Dark Hair .....       | 47 "         |
| " Length L. Middle Finger. . | 112 "       | Light Hair .....      | 20 "         |
| " Length L. Little Finger..  | 86 "        |                       |              |
| " Length L. Forearm.....     | 455 "       |                       |              |
| " Max. Length of Head ...    | 190 "       |                       |              |
| " Max. Width of Head ....    | 149 "       |                       |              |

Of the thirty-eight who were guilty of burglary, only 10 per cent. were foreigners; 97 per cent. were laborers. Comparing table VI with Post Office criminals in general (table I), we find that while burglars have about the same height as all Post Office criminals, their arms are shorter.

Another interesting class of Post Office criminals is those who were guilty of both safe blowing and burglary. Although these have already been included in table VI, a special report on them may prove to be of value. Of this class, there were fifteen, or 14 per cent. of the whole number.

Comparing tables VI and VII, we find that those guilty of safe-blowing and burglary are shorter in stature and have shorter arms and fingers than all the burglars combined. The safe-blowers also have smaller heads (shorter and narrower) than Post Office burglars in general. While only 20 per cent. of the whole number of Post Office criminals were tattooed, 70 per cent. of those guilty of safe-blowing and burglary were tattooed. While practically none of those guilty of frauds were tattooed (only 3 per cent.), we find that 38 per cent. of all those guilty of burglary were tattooed.

By comparison, we find that among

these Post Office criminals, the light-haired Americans are taller and have longer fingers, arms and feet than the dark-haired Americans. Their weights are identical. A larger percentage of Americans with dark hair than of those with light hair had an alias and were tattooed.

It would also appear that the foreigners with light hair are taller than those with dark hair. Though the dark-haired foreigners are 25 mm. shorter in stature than those with light hair, they have longer arms and longer fingers. Twenty-five per cent. of foreigners with dark hair, while none with light hair, had a known alias. None of the light-haired foreigners, but 25 per cent. of those with dark hair, were guilty of burglary. Eighty per cent. of the foreigners with light hair, as compared with 37 per cent. of those with dark hair, committed robbery.

#### *Cephalic Index.*

Of these 111 Post Office criminals, six were dolichocephali, sixty-one were mesocephali and forty-four were brachycephali.

Of the ninety-two Americans, three were dolichocephali, fifty-five were mesocephali and thirty-four were brachycephali.

Of the nineteen foreigners, three

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